

ALBERTA Street News

Volume 12

Issue 2

February 2015

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HE IS NOT A NUMBER...HE IS MY SON



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ALBERTA STREET NEWS

Volume 12, Issue 2, 2015

Alberta Street News is an independent publication produced
by volunteers and sold by vendors on the street



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EDITORIAL



By Linda Dumont

Changes are coming for Alberta Street News.....

Back in the 70's huge crowds gathered in the city's parks to listen to the music and to sing songs like "Times they Are a Changing", and "We Shall Overcome." I remember wearing a bedspread while walking barefoot down the city streets, on my way to join those at Christian coffee houses in church basements and the old Hope Mission. Hippie Christians, dubbed Jesus Freaks, gathered for house meetings and crowded into rooms where we sat on the floor. Once the room was full, the overflow simply stood in the hallway. On downtown street corners stood Hari Krishna members wearing yellow robes. They were there to recruit new

members, who would be sent to India to learn their ways. The Children of God handed out pamphlets to attract new converts for their sect.

It is now 2015, and times are changing for *Alberta Street News*. Over the next few months you will notice major changes to the paper. For eleven years it has struggled to survive while being run by volunteers on a very low budget. They are fresh with ideas from a new perspective with Laura Hunt taking on the role of Editor in Chief, and Melissa O'Keefe taking over the role of Managing Editor. Readers can look forward to an up to date look on the layout and design, as well as to the website. I will still be on board, writing along with new writers, who will bring added dimensions to *Alberta Street News*. Vendors will still be out selling the papers on city sidewalks.

Flexibility is the key to survival, and change is inevitable. We just have to ensure that change, when it comes, is for the better!

Change is Good

By Laura Hunt

"The way of the creative works through change and transformation, so that each thing receives its true nature and destiny and comes into permanent accord with the great harmony: this is what furthers and what perseveres."
I Ching

Firstly, I would like to thank Linda Dumont and her wonderful team of writers and volunteers that have worked so diligently over the years to produce this publication. A big thank you and pat on the back to each of you!

I would like everyone to know that *Alberta Street News* will continue to provide a diverse and relevant voice for those who have been marginalized and are concerned about social injustice issues. Our mandate

remains the same in the way of producing a publication that strives to educate and provide "food for thought" for our readers, as well as providing employment opportunities for those who are in need.

We are very pleased to announce that we have a number of new writers debuting their columns in this issue, and are confident our readers will find their fresh perspectives both interesting and inspiring. We have also expanded the paper from 12 pages to 20 in order to provide more content ongoing.

I am excited about the changes and plans we have for the future, and am confident that "Alberta Street News" will make great strides towards its full potential in the coming year.

The sky is the limit on this one.

"He is not a number - he is my son"



Photo by Allan Sheppard - At the Truth and Reconciliation Conference in Edmonton last March.

By Linda Dumont

For Marguerite Simpson the legacy of the residential schools continues even as she copes with the death of her son, just one more statistic claimed by that legacy. She called the Sunday before Christmas, her voice was heavy with grief, and said, "I've found my son. He's passed on. The police came and told me. They're having ceremonies at the Native Healing Centre for him."

I know too well what that is like - the knock on the door, and the two police officers standing on the steps, respectful, hats in hand, when they come with bad news.

Marguerite had called a week before, concerned when Timothy didn't come home for three days. Her search for her son was unsuccessful - the places she called would not tell her anything because he was over 18 - the hospital, the jails, all dead ends. I told her the way to find out if someone is in Remand Centre is to call to book a visit. If the person is not there they will tell you, or if they book a visit, you know where he is. The same goes for the hospitals.

Marguerite first called in August to share her story of the struggle to help her son, who was diagnosed with a brain injury as well as mental illness and alcoholism. Even as she spoke, her thoughts repeatedly returned to memories of the residential school where she spent her life from the age of five until she was sent home at the 16, and of the abuse she endured during her life.

"I blame it on the residential school," she said sadly. "They had no mirrors. I didn't know who I was.... The nuns wouldn't let us touch ourselves. We couldn't wash down.

"The nuns bathed us, three of us at a time in very cold water for there were just two toilets and one bathtub for 55 of us. We had to line up for everything, even toilets. We had four

squares for monthlies - a gray sheet cut into squares to rewash and wear with two safety pins as we started to mature into ladies. They showed us how to hide our breasts by them cutting the cup on the brassieres, because they said we were doing this so we weren't tempting the thoughts of the boys."

A cancer survivor, Marguerite chose not to have breast reconstruction after her mastectomy. Indicating the flatness on the right side of her chest, she said, "We were taught not to respect our body. It means nothing to me.... I was diagnosed with cancer in 2005. I went through all their cancer treatments for eight full months. I am in remission today, but listen to this - 13 days after my treatment I was very sick with the medication for cancer. One day before New Years my husband I were arguing loudly. The door was kicked in. There stood a city police officer- very tall and big (I am 5 feet 4 and a half). He said to go with him. I said 'I can't for I am in the care of a doctor and am feeling very sick.' He had a very long Ukrainian name. He brutally grabbed me and said, "I don't give a F___." Nose bleed! Shiner! Exposed my mastectomy! Kicked my dog! I cried. No one would rescue me. Scared to death. Went to the van waiting outside the apartment."

Marguerite's son Timothy was born November 21, 1966 in the Charles Camell Hospital in Edmonton. She was later married and had a daughter with her husband.

"I had an abusive husband. I couldn't stand it so I left after two years. He was Timothy's stepfather. I lived alone as a single mom."

"I moved all over the place while we were married. After I left him, I moved in with Native Canadian Housing. I would get a baby sitter to go shopping. One day I came home and she was not there - just a card on the table that said 'Child Welfare

Services'. On the back it said 'We have your children.' I phoned the next day. An anonymous caller said I had abandoned my children. My ex husband had called them after he sent the baby sitter home. I was told I had to appear in courts so I went to court for my children. They were placed in foster homes in McGrath, far away. I was still in a traumatized state. They were moved from foster home to foster home. That when I started drinking so then they had that to use against me. They kept saying they were taking my children for six months, for four months, from foster home to foster home, all over the place.

"I didn't know my rights. I was in the residential school from 5 to 16 years old. I finished Grade Four. They let us loose. We were not taught life skills in that prison called Residential School..... for we were surrounded by barbed wire fence. What really hurts deeply is that I was pulled away from my family of 13 with my siblings. Both of my older sisters should be here today."

Years later, once her children were grown up, they were finally reunited. Her daughter married, and is doing well, living with her husband in Calgary, but her son, Timothy, wound up on the streets drinking all the time. In 2011 Timothy took off for Vancouver. He was drinking on the streets, but he phoned his mother every month. Then the phone calls stopped.

"Three months later, I didn't hear from him at all. I knew something was wrong so I searched for him. I posted an AWOL March 2011 to 2012 in all the churches in East Hastings. Someone called me and said, 'I heard Timothy is in the General Hospital in Vancouver.' I phoned my band for help and went to Vancouver. At the hospital they did not tell me he had an injury - 'subdural hematoma'. I sneaked a look at his chart. July 2012. They would not tell me anything, just said, 'He's over 18.'

"From the hospital he was moved to Evergreen Hamlet in Surrey, B.C. I thought it was a head injury hospital. I went every day, and he could not even talk to me on the phone. After six months he was moved to Delta View Habitation Centre where they have old people, who have Alzheimer's. He was the only young person there. I went there November 21 to visit him. He was on many drugs. He recognized me and hugged me and his aunt who was with me.

"I asked about his pills. They gave me a list of psychiatric drugs. I believe he had improper treatment after a head injury. I believe they

thought he was a bum and First Nations. He went through a lot of hell in all those foster homes. He was shuffled around. I had no say. They kept saying, 'He's over 18', but how could he speak for himself when he had a head injury?"

In 2013, Marguerite appealed for help. She went to the Native Friendship Centre in Vancouver, she complained to the Mothers of B.C. and other places - anywhere that would listen.

"I phoned all over but nothing was done. Finally he was moved to Surrey Memorial Hospital for evaluation and they cut all of his drugs down. My son could talk to me again. He treated me as a son treats his mom."

"They certified him, and told me they were looking for a placement. I called him every day. My son said he wanted to come home. He said he couldn't even go out for a smoke. Then he was discharged to a place called the Lux. I went there and got him. I took a cab there. It was a men's hostel. It was an old building, and when he came out, he was filthy, drunk and unshaven. I hugged him and told him we were going home to Edmonton."

That was August 2, 2014.

Marguerite tried to help her son, who was living with her in her one bedroom apartment since last summer, when she took the bus to Vancouver, and brought him back to Edmonton to take care of him. She set up a futon bed in her living room, and struggled to make ends meet on her old age pension, while going through the process of getting Timothy set up with Alberta Works. She checked him into Poundmaker Lodge for treatment, but after a brief stay, he left the centre returned to her apartment. In the end the call of the street was too strong. Marguerite phoned to say, "I can't stand it. My son is killing himself. He is out drinking every day."

She couldn't stop him. It was too little, too late. He died on the street.

This year when the memorials are held for the men and women who died due to homelessness, Timothy will be among them. Who is to blame? Marguerite says, "I blame it on the residential school." She should know.

Marguerite said, "Who knows themselves better than themselves? I want to go to the Aboriginal Healing Ways and get to know my people more, stating today and that goes for my children."

Visitors from South Africa



Photo By: Jim Gurnett

By Jim Gurnett

Edmonton Coalition on Housing and Homelessness (ECOHH) had the opportunity to meet with five members of the Legislature of Eastern Cape a Province of South Africa and their staff on an information tour to learn about housing security matters in Alberta. On behalf of ECOHH John Kolkman, Dave Prodan, Susan Watson, and Jim Gurnett presented information about ECOHH's activities and perspective on a number of key

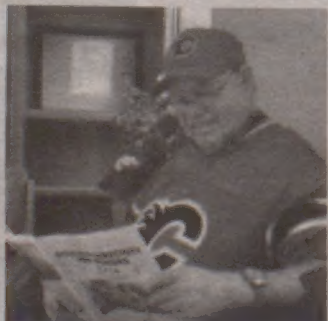
issues such as addressing high rent and what municipalities can do to develop more affordable housing.

In discussion, the visitors expressed surprise that the right to housing is not protected in the Canadian constitution and said their legislature has set housing security as one of its top five priorities. "The threat to shelter destabilizes communities," one said.

The Kiss of the Wild

By Ryan Robertson

Snow to the West
Had to leave
The city behind
Like all
The rest
Had like
A family gathering
With lots of smiles
Put behind
All the miles'
Treated well
All was real swell
Walked to
And from
The lower lake
Caught Beauty
On the make.
Memories were made
Of this
Mother Nature
Gave us all
A kiss...



Winning

By Ryan Robertson

Winning
That time
Of year has arrived
Once again...
A time
To rejoice
And celebrate –
A time to gather
And be with
Family and friends
But not
Is all well
With some
Who struggle
And we must not
Forget them
We must make
Them fortunate
For by giving
We all win...

We Eat Well

By Ernie Ballandine

We eat well, and hen we die.
We live to die, where's the lie?
If all the wise men are correct in their wisdom
What is amiss in our system?
One should never overlook
What one reads in the Big Book
However when things are going so swell
We relax, we stretch our extremities, we eat well.
We eat well even in our poor section
We eat well, believe we've almost caught up with those in
prison.

Katherine

By Ernest E. Moranetz

Kay was a party girl
She loved to eat,
She loved to drink
And
She loved to dance.
She lived fat
And died too soon.
Her favourite saying was, "Live it up."
And she did.
I miss her



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Street Pastor



Photo By: Peter Schultz

By Peter Schultz

After I completed my year at Kee Way Tin Bible Institute in Lac La Biche, I continued being involved as a member of the First Nations Bible Institute. I sometimes attend the Edmonton Crossroads Community Church of the Salvation Army in the inner city, the Mustard Street Church, and the Bissell Church.

The German Church of God (Now just called Church of God) had the greatest impact on me. Our family worshipped there as soon as we got to Canada in 1951. It was a conservative church that emphasized that everyone who has Jesus in their heart belonged to God's church or Kingdom. If we followed the truth we knew He would reveal more truth to us so we could experience being filled with the Holy Spirit, and could trust Christ to love others through us. We could live a Christ-like life if we continued to trust His power and guidance day by day. When we did sin, we could "breathe spiritually" by exhaling our confession of any sin we may have committed, followed by inhaling and trusting Christ's forgiveness and inviting Him to come back onto the throne of our life.

The church had a great impact on me and when I heard it was splitting, I fell on my knees and asked God to stop it. It was this event that set off my bipolar condition. A traumatic factor, such as my stressful feelings regarding the upheaval in my church, is a common trigger for people who are bipolar. I was in my 20's then and this is a common age for bipolar symptoms to appear in those who suffer with this condition. Until then I was mainly constantly joyful for over ten years, and was judgmental of people who were sad or depressed.

In the past 40 plus years that I've been bipolar, I have learned to not only empathize with depressed people, but to be able to communicate with people high on drugs or booze. That has been of tremendous help to me in communicating effectively with people of the inner-city.

The incident that resulted in many homeless people seeing me as an advocate for them happened the day Tent City, which was situated behind the Bissell Centre, was being evacuated by the police. I knew some of those people, whom I

considered as friends, had no where else to live. I decided I would park my car beside the police van on the grass, hoping to be of help in some way. Unfortunately I miscalculated how slippery the grass was and slid into a policeman with my car.

I was immediately handcuffed and taken to the police cells. It was very cold in there and I wasn't given a blanket or sweater. Many have told me that is the norm. I made several phone calls, even phoning the police complaint line because by midnight I hadn't been given my bipolar meds. That really upset the guards, and a policeman got my meds from my residence so I eventually got them. They quickly removed my phone, and after a while I was transferred to jail.

The next day at court I found out how valuable a good reputation was. No one could accuse me of ever being violent or lying. I had some good references, and thankfully the Judge didn't think I did it on purpose, otherwise I would surely have gotten a sentence of several years. As it was I enjoyed my time there, being glad to experience

what most of the people I dealt with experienced. I told my psychiatrist that I believe God needed me more in jail that day than on the drag. I appreciate freedom more since then too.

I'm now semi-retired and work only part-time in the inner city, mostly in the Boyle Street Community Centre, and the Rock Breakfast Club in St. Peter's Lutheran Church on 96 Street and 110 Avenue. I spend 2 or 3 days a week with my 93 year old mum in Millwoods. She is so thankful that God has blessed us so abundantly that most of her offspring are serving God. Many in leadership positions in the Gracepoint Church of God. I go with her at least once a month. I am very thankful for the family God has given me, and the family of close friends I enjoy in the inner city.



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Welcome to the Premier Edition of Con Boland

May you live in Interesting Times

By Con Boland MPH

The saying: "May you live in interesting times", is something people in China wish upon their enemies.

Currently, we are living in a world in turmoil. The psychopathic elite who run our world, desperately want another war for profit. They plan and fund the destabilisation of many a nation, while income inequality has gone off the charts. Many struggle with basic needs in these tough, economic, transformational times.

In a time where slavery was supposed to be abolished, millions are now waking up to the fact that we have become economic slaves to an obscenely wealthy, criminal elite – the 1%.

Over the past hundred years, these "elite", have been able to successfully brainwash us using the techniques of Edward Bernays: "The Father of Spin." He was the man who wrote the how-to manual on the 'manufacturing of consent', and was the mastermind behind the selling of Fluoridation. How else can you get the public to drink and bathe in toxic waster and make them believe it is actually good for them?

Our minds poisoned with Big Pharma – Geo-engineering, Fluoride, Aspartame, MSG and more. They attacked our health with MonSatan's GMO foods, and extremely toxic chemicals like Glyphosate that kills precious creatures, like our bees and the beautiful monarchs while depleting the nutrients in our soils.

They have been able to steal our hard earned money through banks, taxation, licensing, permits, penalties and fines, while bombing our brothers and sisters in other nations with trillion-dollar false wars for profit, weaponized drones, and their enormous military complex. They keep building billion dollar gladiator type arenas that provide 'games' to

keep the masses distracted and from focusing on the things that really matter. They "bought" our leaders as their puppets, and perpetuated irrelevant, meaningless 'royalty' - like Queens and Popes and a thousand different businesses that are organised religions and false belief systems – in order to keep us all divided.

It's time to wake up and smell the coffee!

Thanks to the internet, and our instant hyper connectivity, transparency has become the rule of this new age. Finally, we are free from a corporately controlled media – the enemy of truth.

The time to stand together in solidarity and love is upon

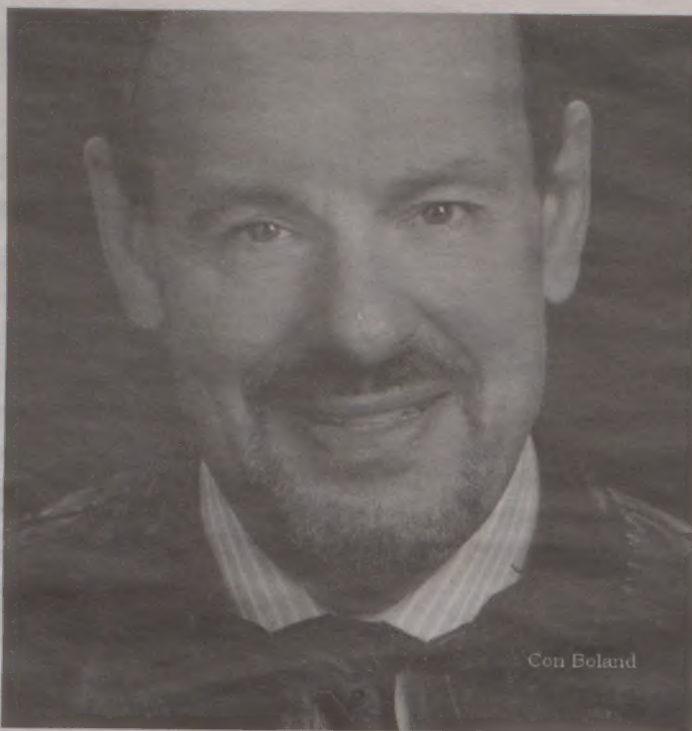
us. Collectively, we will decide if our species will evolve or perish with extinction. It's really that simple.

The floodgates of information have opened, and the sorry state of decay and corruption within our governments and big corporations has become blatantly obvious to even the most "loyal" and "patriotic" of citizens. The criminal elite have been busy with the militarization of our police, the building of ever larger prisons, and Fema camps. They work hard to remove ever more of our freedoms, using false flag operations, staged riots with agent provocateurs, and fictitious wars that can never be won, like "The war on Drugs", or the "War on Terror."

Even the term, "conspiracy-theorist", was coined in an attempt to discredit those who can see through their smoke-screens.

My wish for 2015, is that we turn off all the mind numbing corporately controlled media, start voting with our dollars, eat organic foods and take an active part to become involved in honouring this Earth as the truly magical place it is -- and should be for all.

I wish you peace and a splendid 2015.



Con Boland

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Hearts and Roses



By Sharon S.

As a culture we love a holiday. In fact, if you watch carefully in the stores, they go from one holiday to the next. The minute Halloween is over the Christmas decorations go up and Halloween stuff is on sale 75% off.

One of the most loved holidays is Valentine's Day. Brilliant red hearts and bow wielding Cupid's appear everywhere, tantalizing us and setting our hearts a-flutter long before the day arrives. More diamond engagement rings are sold around that date than any other. For many who have a beloved, imaginations run wild in expectation of what surprise will arrive from our sweetheart. We search and search for that special card that will express the perfect words to our love. We all recognize that some are better at remembering this date than others. It is quite hilarious to watch some poor lover realize at the last moment. Running like scared rabbits, digging frantically through the leftovers to find something that is unique enough to pass inspection and not look like a bargain basement find. These last minute shoppers are trying to avoid any embarrassment on their part, or anger or disappointment from their partners. There is also a lot of stress associated with finding the perfect gift that will express your heart felt sentiment without a word.

For many, hearts will be a-flutter with joy and overwhelmed with love on this special day. But, there is a darker side to Valentine's Day, something we need to be reminded of... what about the widow who has lost the love of her life and struggles without him, feeling like half of her is gone? What about the lonely heart who longs to be cherished and loved? For them this is not a happy day and they would much sooner it didn't exist. I was recently told by a new widow, "I hate that day." She spoke venomously, "I just can't stand it." It can be a day of sadness by the worlds standards that we are a failure at being loved.

I once threw a Valentine party for all my single girlfriends, using dollar store decorations, we all dressed up and had a beautiful candlelight dinner. We all presented each other with cards. Everyone went away happy. The recent tragic death of my only daughter has taught me so much. Time is short and we never know how long we will have with each other. God opened my eyes and I began to see things differently. How much time does it take to smile at complete strangers or tell the teller at Walmart? "Gee I like your hair", or, "Thanks for doing a great job." You'll never know what a kind smile or a pleasant remark could mean to a discouraged and lonely person, it just might make their day. We never know how long we have upon this earth or the impact we actually have on the people we come in contact with.

The verse that comes to me regarding this is Peter 4:8 "Love covers a multitude of sins."

This Valentine's Day may Gods love for others abound within your heart. Just open your eyes and look around you.



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By phone: **780.399.6788**

By email: **melissa.o@martyshukhousing.ca**



PETER GOLDRING
Member of Parliament
Edmonton East

HELPING SAVE UCAMA

Member of Parliament for Edmonton East, Peter Goldring has actively supported a new site for the future of the Ukrainian Canadian Archives and Museum of Alberta (UCAMA) to help ensure that Ukrainian-Canadian culture and heritage is preserved and remembered for many future generations.

This new facility in the former Lodge Hotel will mean a great deal to Edmonton's Downtown East. The site will be in close proximity to St. Barbara's Cathedral, the origin of Ukrainian Orthodox worshipping in Northern Alberta, being built in 1905, and will help revitalize the area. UCAMA's new building will draw people to the area to experience the museum's educational and cultural offerings, with an accompanying economic boost. However, without adequate funding the completion of this project might not be possible.

After two years, construction has come to a halt due to financial difficulty. As the current building does not provide a suitable venue to house the organization's extensive collections, federal, provincial, and municipal governments have each provided upwards of \$3 million, while private donors have raised \$1.2 million to help the organization relocate to a new facility. Currently, the museum needs \$5 million to complete the renovations.

Mr. Goldring has long been a proponent of the project, and continues to actively campaign for support from all three-levels of government. The museum will showcase the histories and accomplishments of Ukrainian immigrants and their families of Edmonton East since the early 1900s. These include many elected leaders like William Lesick, MP (1984-1988); William Yurko, MP (1969-1979) and MLA (1979-1984); William Skoreyko, MP (1958-1979); Ambrose Holowach, MP (1953-1958) and MLA (1959-1971); and Edmonton East's Member of Parliament since 1997, and his wife, Lorraine Taschuk, and her family.

Ukrainian immigrants contributed greatly to the settlement and growth of Western Canada. What do you think about the future of UCAMA?

780-495-3261 www.petergoldring.ca

Insider Perspective: Homelessness



By Laura Hunt

"Get a job you bum!"

In September of 2012, I was hired as "Nurse Navigator" by Dot for HAART and Martyshuk Housing here in Edmonton. I could no longer work as a hospital nurse, as I had developed a skin condition that affected my hands, which made it no longer possible to perform the rigorous hand washing necessary for acute hospital areas. An average hospital clinician is required to hand wash between 50 to 200 times a days. While I was sad to leave my position as an in-hospital registered nurse, I knew there was something out there that would somehow give me an opportunity to contribute in a new and important way. After a period of much soul searching, I decided I would get involved in something that was close to my heart. Helping the homeless. Why was that close to my heart? Well... I had a difficult childhood as my mother was an alcoholic, and I had no father figure or extended family in the picture for starters. My mother, myself and my 3 siblings lived on social assistance after my mother got out of a terribly abusive relationship, so you could say that I am more than a little familiar with the issues that surround this kind of thing. So...it seemed like a natural transition for me and definitely something that life had prepared me for. I was homeless many times during my teen years, so I do understand the challenges and vulnerabilities that come with that. I was kicked out of the house at the age of 14 by my mother's alcoholic boyfriend and due to former bad experiences with the foster system in the 1970's, I chose to look after myself the best way I could. As terrifying as it was to be out on the street, I was in a way, relieved to be released from the mental and physical abuse that came with the situation I endured at home. This did, however, make it very difficult to grow up in ways that would fully prepare me as be a functional adult. How I did as well as I did I will never fully understand. I would have to say that grace has played a large part in it, but that is a story all to itself.

My first assignment as "Nurse Navigator", was to familiarize myself with the Martyshuk Housing model and all things related to the cause and effects of homelessness. I did a lot of research regarding the implications of homelessness, with particular emphasis on mental and physical health effects. I became familiar with many of the tenants of Martyshuk Housing, as well as a variety of other "street folk", and began to build a relationship with them on a case by case basis. Was it sometimes frightening and intimidating to surround myself with people who suffer with mental illness, behavioral difficulties and severe addictions? Yes. At times it was. Was it sometimes overwhelming to be challenged to provide solutions and support to these individuals in the face of so little resources? Yes. It was. Did I learn some very important things about the homeless that came as a surprise to me despite my own background? Yes. I did.

The "hard cold truth" about the factors related to chronic homelessness is simply this. It takes much more than just putting a roof over someone's head in order to "fix" the problem in most cases. Although, admittedly that's exactly where we need to start. I am a great supporter of the "Housing First" philosophy. Past models have worked on the premise that you need to somehow "fix" the individual first and house them later. I believe that housing is a basic human right, and "Home is where one starts from". Can you imagine how difficult it would be to make positive changes to your life while living on the street? This would be a very daunting task for even the healthiest of individuals. For those with barriers it is practically impossible. So...to all those who maintain the idea of "get a job you bum!" I invite you to consider how difficult that really would be having no fixed address, identification or steady past work history. The homeless are often adversely affected by a variety of serious mental illnesses, cognitive and educational barriers, and self-esteem issues related to the cause of addictions. It is not difficult to understand that the despair factor of homelessness and the situations that lead up to it are pretty tough to deal with. In addition, a large majority of homeless individuals come from dysfunctional families and do not have anyone that can help them. Or, conversely, even if they are fortunate enough to have a functional caring family, these families are often "at their wits end" as they do not have the resources or knowledge necessary to provide their loved

ones with the help they need. I sincerely believe this is something that "Joe Public", and society in general would benefit greatly from having a better understanding of. Simply put, it is not that easy for many of these folks to "get a job," and get off the streets. And, simply put, the cost of housing and availability of supportive housing is currently creating a situation that has no end in sight.

In the past few years I have worn a number of "hats" under the title of "Nurse Navigator." This has given me a first-hand look at the issues affecting the homeless and "hard-to-house." I held the position of "Health and Wellness Coordinator", for the tenants of MacDonald Lofts and the 23 shared accommodation houses, operated by Martyshuk Housing in the city of Edmonton. I also took on the task of "Program Director" in the first year of the opening of a supportive, congregate living facility in downtown Edmonton known as "Dwayne's Home." During that time I did in depth assessments, navigation and placement of hundreds of individuals who had in one way or another struggled with homelessness and/or had been "living in the rough." Martyshuk Housing has done an amazing job of creating a grassroots model that has successfully housed many of Edmonton's chronically homeless and hard-to-house. I have, however, noted some large gaps in the current support services available. The gaps are many, but I am particularly interested in filling the gaps in the area of supportive employment. For instance, would it come as a surprise to you to know that many of the chronically homeless would love to have an opportunity to contribute to their financial well-being, and to society in general through supportive employment opportunities? Would it surprise you to know that having the opportunity to contribute in even a very simple way does wonders for their self-esteem, and they become much more cooperative components of their own self care? I assure you this is true. Would it come as a surprise to you to know that many of these individuals are very talented in areas related to the arts? I also assure you that this is true. Currently, with the exception of vendor opportunities provided by "Alberta Street News", there is not much out there that is addressing the need for supportive employment for those affected by homelessness. If we truly wish to end homelessness, supportive employment is an important factor that must be addressed. We need to focus on ways to help individuals to help themselves in order to break the cycle. We must give them a "hand

up", as opposed to a "hand out." Yes, there are agencies such as "Employabilities", but, I have found that their focus is more on those with physical disabilities as opposed to barriers related to dysfunctional upbringing, developmental delays, FASD, mental illness and addiction issues. These are commonly found in individuals who have difficulty obtaining and/or maintaining secure housing.

In response to the gap in services, with particular emphasis on the lack of supportive employment opportunities, I decided to write a proposal for a not-for-profit foundation that focused on raising funding and awareness. Thus, in early 2014, "Homeward Bound Support Services" (HBSS) was born. "Homeward Bound Support Services" is directly funded by profits obtained through the production and distribution of "Alberta Street News". It is one of the reasons that we at ASN are so passionate regarding our aim to increase circulation to a number of at least 50,000 copies sold monthly in Alberta (and potentially beyond) by the end of 2015.

Dear Reader,

Please take note that by purchasing and/or subscribing to this paper you have contributed not only to the employment of the homeless, but also to future projects related to creating additional supportive employment and supportive services necessary to abolish homelessness. Congratulations and thank you for being a part of the change we would like to see. I am most honored to be entrusted with the task of "Editor-in-Chief" of this very worthy publication and with your support I look forward to amazing progress in 2015!

Please go to www.HBSS.ca to find out more or to make a donation.

Vendor Profile - Belle St. Michel



By Eric Rice

"The Lord's mercy often rides to the door of our heart upon the black horse of affliction."
— Charles H. Spurgeon

The words of 19th century pastor Charles Spurgeon may not resound as they once did in the halls of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, but they certainly resonate in the life of Belle St. Michel. Born in January (she declined politely to give the year), she was raised by her grandparents in Winnipeg. She remembers it as a difficult upbringing. Her grandfather was an alcoholic who molested the girls in the household. Belle didn't meet her mom until she was six, and due to the abuse at home found herself on the road at the tender age of sixteen, hitchhiking around the country from Winnipeg to Edmonton to Chilliwack.

When she was seventeen she was reborn for the first time. On the road and without a home, she was visiting an aunt in Winnipeg when she suffered from an infected gall bladder. The medication the doctor prescribed caused a rare condition called Stevens-Johnson Syndrome, a reaction to medication that results in symptoms including a painful rash that spreads across your body, leaving behind a dead layer of skin that peels. She can remember an out-of-body experience — lying in bed with the doctors around her, she sat up, and wondered what everybody was looking at behind her. She realized it was her own body, and she could hear someone telling her to lay back down, that she was not yet ready for death. She spent two months recovering in hospital and had to learn how to walk, how to talk and how to live again. She

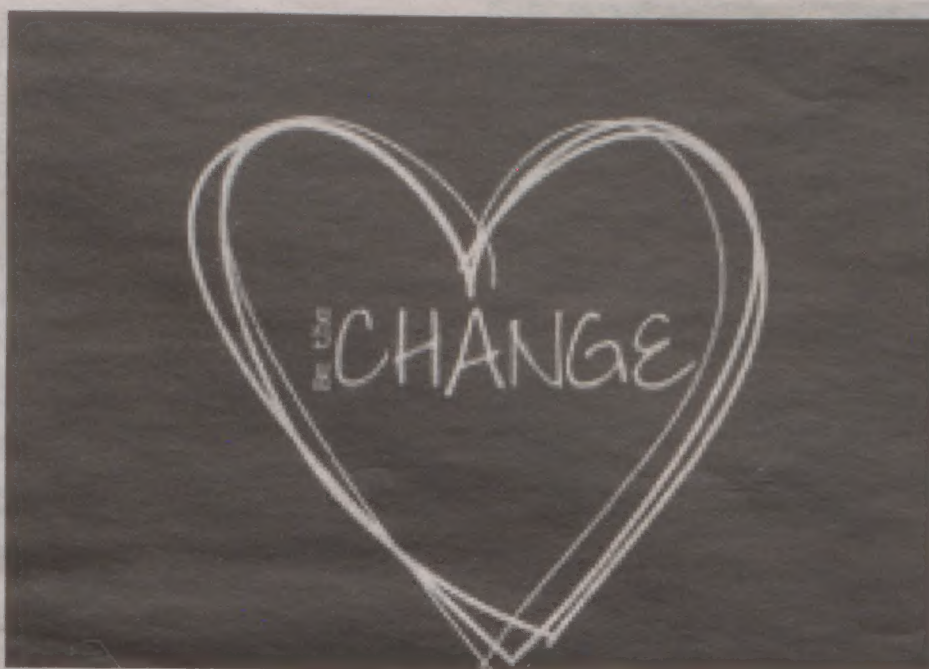
says that she had no strength of her own — she relied totally on God.

On the road after her recovery she went back to Chilliwack, B.C. There she met her late husband, Clayton, and had two children. Children were another miracle. The doctors had told her that she could never have children. Belle refused to believe that. She prayed to have children, and promised God that if He granted her wish, she would raise them as Christians and take them to Church. God granted her wish, and she kept her part of the bargain.

When she was 34 she went back to school, earning a diploma in Native Adult Instruction while working and raising her kids. She taught for many years in Chilliwack. When she was 40 her health and her vision began to give her problems. Teaching was no longer possible, so she went to work in the rig camps, cooking and cleaning. That's when she suffered her first heart attack and could no longer work.

When she was 50 she experienced her second rebirth. A brain aneurism brought her close to death once again, and a series of heart attacks caused her to require 18 hours of surgery in order to perform a much needed quadruple bypass. Once again she started to leave her body, and this time she heard a voice, a voice that her whole body could feel. The voice spoke her name three times. She didn't want to listen at first. She had suffered so much. But finally she felt she had to listen. The voice told her to go back and tell others that God loves them. Tell others that God will call them. Tell them that He exists.

Belle is now in a better place in her life than ever before. She has a place in Edmonton and is supported through physical disability payments. She sells Alberta Street News as part of her mission to share the message about the miracles she has experienced. When people pass her she engages them, walks with them and talks with them about their lives. Her message is clear. She is not a mistake. God planned her. That is what she tells people and why she lives. Belle's mission is to share that unfathomable joy with others.



DIVINE KINDNESS

By Corey Edwards

I sip hatred and sorrow like wine, knowing that I stumble blind,
But every day I choose to remember that the Gods have been kind,
I have cursed heaven more times than I can count,
Walking streets looking for blood like the infamous Count,
I have often tasted my own, been shown that I was zero,
That it's only superheroes that have huge unvanquished egos,
But they only exist on paper and in the minds of weak nerds,
Who live in their mother's basement, guzzling their words,
Before I used to survive now I simply wish to live,
And accept with good grace whatever life might give,
I tread upon the flesh of the earth hoping that my worth,
Will not abandon me like my mother's love since birth,
Even though I am so cruel and, though smart, a hopeless fool,
I hope that in the future I'll know how to obey the rules,
And that if I choose to break them hopefully the consequences,
Will be swift and brutal, bringing me to my senses,
Sometimes it seems that I look at life through chain-link fences,
But I no longer wish to be passive and warming the benches,
If tortured emotions had odour I'd be giving off stench,
Like the corpses of rotting soldiers lying in trenches,
Sometimes I wonder why I breathe, what is my purpose,
I look at the world around me: it looks like a circus,
Most people swear that they're free but from what I see,
They look more ridiculous than a monkey sitting in a tree,
And the thing that bothers me is that I may be like them,
Thinking that I'm smart when I'm stupid in the end,
Chasing a dragon who is simply a fabrication,
Of a frail and tortured mind that always needs medication,
So I direct my concentration on the writing of the verse,
Sure that I'm richly poor and blessed with the curse,
Always on the look-out for the worst 'cause I've been burned,
But these days I try to be an optimist acutely concerned,
Pessimism masquerading as realism is nihilism,
It's like looking at the world through a carbon coated prism,
And at the end of the day it's worse than being in prison,
It is of your own construction, people tell you but you don't listen,
I've spent many a year in that hole in the end it darkened my soul,
And seared the flesh of my heart like burning hot coals,
Where am I going? I don't know but I know where I've been,
And I don't want to return to see the Devil's grin,
So every day I choose to begin, to dream, to realize,
Projects that give me pleasure no matter what the size,
I have failed in the past chances are I'll fail again,
But suffering and disappointment permeates the lives of men,
I have often known them and they're never far away,
But they're a part of the stakes in this fatal game that we play,
So I sip hatred and sorrow like wine, knowing that I stumble blind,
But every day I choose to remember that the Gods have been kind.

Happy Valentine's Day

February is Rare Disease Month



By Sharon Austin

February is Rare Disease Month : Living With a Rare Disease

My favourite flower has always been the wild rose of Alberta. I can still remember the delicate scent of wild roses growing along the road allowance as I walked to school in the warm June sun. It seems somehow cruel to me that the scent of wild roses still lingers in my mind as I have not smelled anything in years. Loss of sense of smell is just one of the symptoms which I have learned to cope with since I began to show symptoms of a rare autoimmune disease. I am just one of the thousands of Canadians sidelined by a rare disease who suffer in silence. There are no pink ribbon campaigns for us, no huge fund-raisers and no-one "Walks for The Cure." There are no bracelets and trinkets

or greeting cards sold to raise money for research, and funeral homes do not offer memorial cards with our disease printed on it. Most of us have been misdiagnosed for years by doctors who are unfamiliar with our rare diseases. Many people, like myself, have had to painstakingly do their own research and then bring the evidence with them to the doctor. Then, grudgingly, they are sent to a specialist in a related field and the whole process begins again.

In my early fifties I was blindsided by a rare autoimmune disease that I didn't even know existed. Even the name (Sjogren's Syndrome) is hard to pronounce as it was named after the Swedish doctor who diagnosed it. Sjogren's syndrome is a rare autoimmune disorder in which the immune system mistakenly attacks the moisture bearing tissues of the body. Extremely dry eyes and mouth, repeated sinus problems, loss of sense of smell and fatigue are all part of Sjogren's syndrome '1'. Sjogren's "2" is much more severe and the disease attacks the nerves of the extremities causing painful neuropathy and can attack any organ of the body. Lymphoma is 40% more common in those who have Sjogren's syndrome. The cause of the disease is unknown, but it is thought to be brought on by a virus in those with a

hereditary predisposition to the disease. Stress, environmental conditions and hormonal factors related to estrogen are also thought to play a part. 95% of those who suffer from Sjogren's syndrome are women.

In my case Sjogren's syndrome began slowly with extremely dry eyes which caused many eye infections. Then one day I realized that I had lost my tears. Imagine never being able to shed a tear! I suffered through terrible sinus infections and eventually lost all sense of smell. It is strange as I can tell that there is a smell but I cannot identify what it is. Last summer our dog came home skunked and I didn't even know it! My mouth has become so dry that I cannot eat without drinking and sometimes it is hard to speak unless I sip water. The worst part is the severe neuropathy in both my feet. It is hard to remember what it felt like not to suffer pain and numbness with every step. I was misdiagnosed for years with everything from plantar fasciitis to poor circulation. Finally, I was sent to a rheumatologist who did extensive blood tests that revealed the antibodies in my blood which confirmed the diagnosis as Sjogren's syndrome. Then came the rounds of immune suppressant drugs, steroids, gamma globulin infusions, and even a chemotherapy infusion, none

of which helped me in the least. At present, I am not on any medications as nothing has helped, and the pain medication that I was put on did not dull the nerve pain enough to make putting up with the way it made me feel worthwhile. I had worked as an educational assistant for many years but the pain and fatigue forced me to retire at 61. People do not understand what it is like to suffer from a rare disease and sometimes they can be very insensitive. I remember when a "friend" told me "There's absolutely nothing wrong with you, your just depressed." I have always been a very optimistic, happy person so depression was the least of my worries. Even now I have great hope that this disease will somehow go into remission.

I am now a senior citizen and I refuse to let this disease define who I am. I do everything I can to live a happy and meaningful life. I greet each morning with gratitude for the blessings the Lord has given me; my family, my warm safe home in the country, my dogs and my many lovely cats. I force myself to take my dogs for long walks even though my feet are numb and painful. I have an unshakable faith in a loving God, who cares about each one of us and I know that He will give me the strength to carry on and see me through this health crisis.



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PHOTO BOOTH RENTALS








My Goal for 2015 - Developing Resilience



By Maria B.

Resilience. This word seems as foreign to me as the skills necessary in how to develop it. Countless times I have heard it said that children have the innate skill of resilience. In my opinion this is misleading because when children grow up in an abusive environment they will either survive or perish. Sure they develop coping strategies, but this does not mean they come out of their childhood without bearing psychological and emotional scars.

To me resilience means having the ability to develop solutions in the face of a crisis or challenging situation. When children are faced with situations beyond their control and maturity level, it affects them in a way that is damaging for life.

Trauma and abuse in childhood affects ones mental, physical and emotional health, as well as

the ability to form relationships with others. Understanding the effects of trauma and validating the experience of abuse can help the survivor connect with their past and find pathways to heal.

For many survivors, the emotions related to abuse are so much a part of their day-to-day life that they don't realize there are alternatives to feeling and reacting to life in the way they do. They are unable to readily regulate their emotions and may seek to soothe their pain through alcohol, drugs, sex, gambling, or other compulsive and destructive behaviors. Many survivors harm themselves out a sense of despair.

These victims have lost their sense of self and the nursing of feelings of fear, despair, anxiety and helplessness is the one thing they are familiar with. In other words they know how to "Feel Broken".

What to do? How do you pick up the pieces and find out who you are in the eyes of God? In my experience. I picked up the pieces that made no sense and when they do not make sense you cannot put them back together. So, I went to the next step. I asked myself "Who am I?" In the first version I found that I am the daughter of a man that despised me and a woman who had no interest in being my mother. Thank God I was raised by my maternal grandmother through my journey of trying to find who I really was.

This is what made sense to me as to who I really am:

I am a gift to the world. God created me in his image and I must reclaim my Divine right as a human to be treated with dignity and respect.

I was born with many gifts that I must develop. I have everything within me I need in order to create an incredible life.

After that I was able to put the pieces back together and realize that I am a very strong woman. I am a warrior and a survivor. I am learning that there are still gifts I want to develop in order to live without strongholds. Resilience is one of them. My past is like a picture in a frame, it doesn't have the power to hurt me anymore. I am able to control that now. I have learned that through awareness, I can now realize that if I had not gone through that, I would not be the person that I am today. I want to live my life practicing kindness and compassion to ensure that my spirit is healthy. I live in peace with myself and others. It all starts with respect for self and respect for others as I make changes in me that I would like to see in the people around me. Everything starts with me.

Good problem solving skills are necessary to strengthen our resilience. We know that crisis can emerge when you least expect it and we must learn to trust and

have faith in ourselves in order to overcome challenges without being crippled by fear, hiding and feeling powerless. In tough situations, people can sometimes develop tunnel vision. They have a difficult time seeing the situation for what it really is. Resilient individuals refuse to see the worst in a situation and develop an attitude of seeking solutions and opportunities. They develop strong and truthful relationships as it is important to surround yourself with people who offer understanding and support. It is important for the survivor to recognize that they may be reacting to a situation in the same manner they did when they were a child. In other words, reacting in a manner that suggests helplessness and fear as they did when they were attacked and had to defend themselves in some way.

People with a damaged spirit approach life with the attitude that everyone is out to get them and they feel as if it is someone else's fault for the pain they are going through. They suffer as they refuse to take responsibility for their own feelings and actions. However, in order to create healing and positive change we all must take responsibility for this. No one else can. In order to live in peace we have to ensure that our every action reflects the words we are saying and the kind of life we want to live.

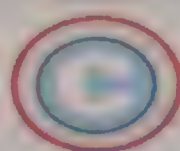


Happy New Everyone!!

I would like to thank all of our clients on behalf of the vendors in both Edmonton and Calgary for your great gifts, donations and kindness.

Best wishes to all of you, and we wish everyone a safe and prosperous 2015.

Vendor: Nick D. - Calgary



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Martyshuk Housing



Welcome to the Premier Edition of Ask Dr. Yasmine

By Melissa O'Keefe

Dr. Yasmine will be writing a column for *Alberta Street News* called "*Ask Dr. Yasmine*", which will encourage our reader's to write to her and have their questions answered. *Alberta Street News* is excited to have Dr. Yasmine writing for our paper. Her advice column will start in March of 2015 so reader's, start submitting your "*Ask Dr. Yasmine*" questions to askdryasmine@albertastreetnews.org today.



Dr. Yasmine Biography

South African European born Dr. Yasmine lost her parents at 14, thus becoming homeless. She became a "street youth" in Vancouver, British Columbia. In order to survive, she worked 2 jobs, one at Wendy's and one at McDonalds and attended school. She needed to keep busy so as not to fall into the entrapment of addictions.

She continued her education at the University of B.C. in Criminology. Her education includes a Masters, a Business Degree and she has a PhD in Fine Arts. In the past, she worked in Forensic Psychology and as a Social Worker for youth

in an outreach program. Today Yasmine is known internationally. She started the "*TRENDY*" Label by selling jewelry, belts and purses at parties from her home. She created an atmosphere of "*Hollywood*" style so her guests would feel elite. She then started designing one of a kind purses and naming them after her client's suggestions. Within 8 months she was in over 17 countries.

Dr. Yasmine, is a multiple Award Nominated Public Icon and multiple International Winner as a Feature Film Production Designer. She is a style and fashion powerhouse that has made a solid name for her series of "*TRENDY*"

label companies and self over recent years. She is currently in the TV, film, music and fashion industry working on her European portfolio as a model, actor and art Director. No project is too small.

Amidst all of her creative endeavors, Dr. Yasmine's drive has always been to motivate people to become their best. She makes public speaking appearances and speaks to audiences around the world. Her topics include confidence and self-esteem. She passionately mentors youth and actively engages in projects promoting multi-cultural diversity, creativity, positive self-esteem and life education. During her travels she films

the world's people for her humanitarian documentary. With the passion of inspiring and changing the world. In mid 2012, she founded, a celebrity endorsed global campaign against low self esteem called "*People Are Not Products*", which is in partnership with the "*WE THE WORLD*", "*WE*" and "*C.A.P.*", which are all humanitarian campaigns. Currently the new partner for her campaign is the New York celebrity humanitarian movement "*Guns Down Life Up*".

"My reaction was one of utter disbelief and elation," said Dr. Yasmine, on receiving such accolades. "I dedicate this to all those who watch and support me. If a little girl like me can do it then so shall you. This massive recognition has humbled me further and pushes me to reach a higher global platform. It proves that I am doing things correctly and I will help more of my dreams become reality. This is part of my journey towards impacting the world. To see no hate or jealousy and to teach people to work without ego collaboratively. I appreciate everyone giving me momentum every day to be a working voice of the people."

Submit your questions to: askdryasmine@albertastreetnews.org



Welcome to the Premier Edition of Reaching for the Stars

By Sabrina Charles

You, me and everything around us...we're made of star-stuff! Deep, deep down inside, in a place your eyes cannot see, are the building blocks of life. And it just so happens that your very own building blocks are the same that make up the stars and planets!

So it is no wonder that when we feel the greatest despair in our lives, we naturally turn upwards, toward the sky for guidance and hope. We throw our heads back and gaze upon the tiny, sparkly, wonders that grace the skies with their presence nightly. We ask the heavens to release this pain or burden that we are feeling and almost like magic, something comes into our life that changes everything!

This, my friends, is the power of the Universe; the power of YOU. Many live their lives not even realizing the power that exists within their fleshy bodies. In fact, many of you don't even realize that you are not your body! No, no. You are the powerful energy, the soul, the shining light that occupies the space that you call your body! You are infinite; your energy can never be destroyed!

I want you to think about energy. What comes to mind? The first thing that came to my mind

was something electric, right? Of course because that is the most common form of energy that exists and that we usually take for granted. But, there is an energy inside of you that you can command, at any time, to help you move your life in the direction that you choose. This energy is your vibration. And here is how it works.

In case anyone never told you, I'm going to tell you: You are a powerful Creator! Every single thought that you think, shapes your life and your reality in ways that you can't even imagine! When you are happy and everything in your life seems to be going your way, it's because of the thoughts and feelings that you have been vibrating! You carry yourself with a happy cheerful outlook, and the Mighty Universe has no choice but to give you more of that!

But friends, this can work against you too! You see, when you have a negative outlook on life, when nothing goes your way, you also put that vibration out and the Mighty Universe again, has no choice but to give you more of that! Uh-oh. Seems a little tricky now, right? Well, it doesn't have to be. With some simple adjustments and some dedicated "me time" to learn how to change your vibration, or frequency, you will be on your way to becoming a master navigator of your own reality!

Without a doubt, we have all experienced our share of despair, upset, loss & beyond, but there is usually a saving Grace that just seems to show up and turn things around right at the perfect timing! Kind of like when football players throw a "Hail Mary" in a football game; a last ditch effort to win the game. That saving Grace is a direct manifestation that you created!

So what is the first thing that you can do to help you create more positive outcomes in your life? Just becoming consciously aware of how you are shaping your reality is the first step. Now, you realize that you have had and will continue to hold the reins throughout your life to navigate where and what you want to create. And this is where I will leave off. This is where you can start. Just by familiarizing yourself with all that was shared today, you will start to notice your thought patterns; your speech patterns, and that is really important at this stage!

In the next edition, I'll go a little more in depth of the subject. So for now, just sit with this. See how it feels. But most of all, remember this one fact: You are a Powerful Creator and nobody can ever take that away from you!

Peace, Love & Joy ~ Sabrina



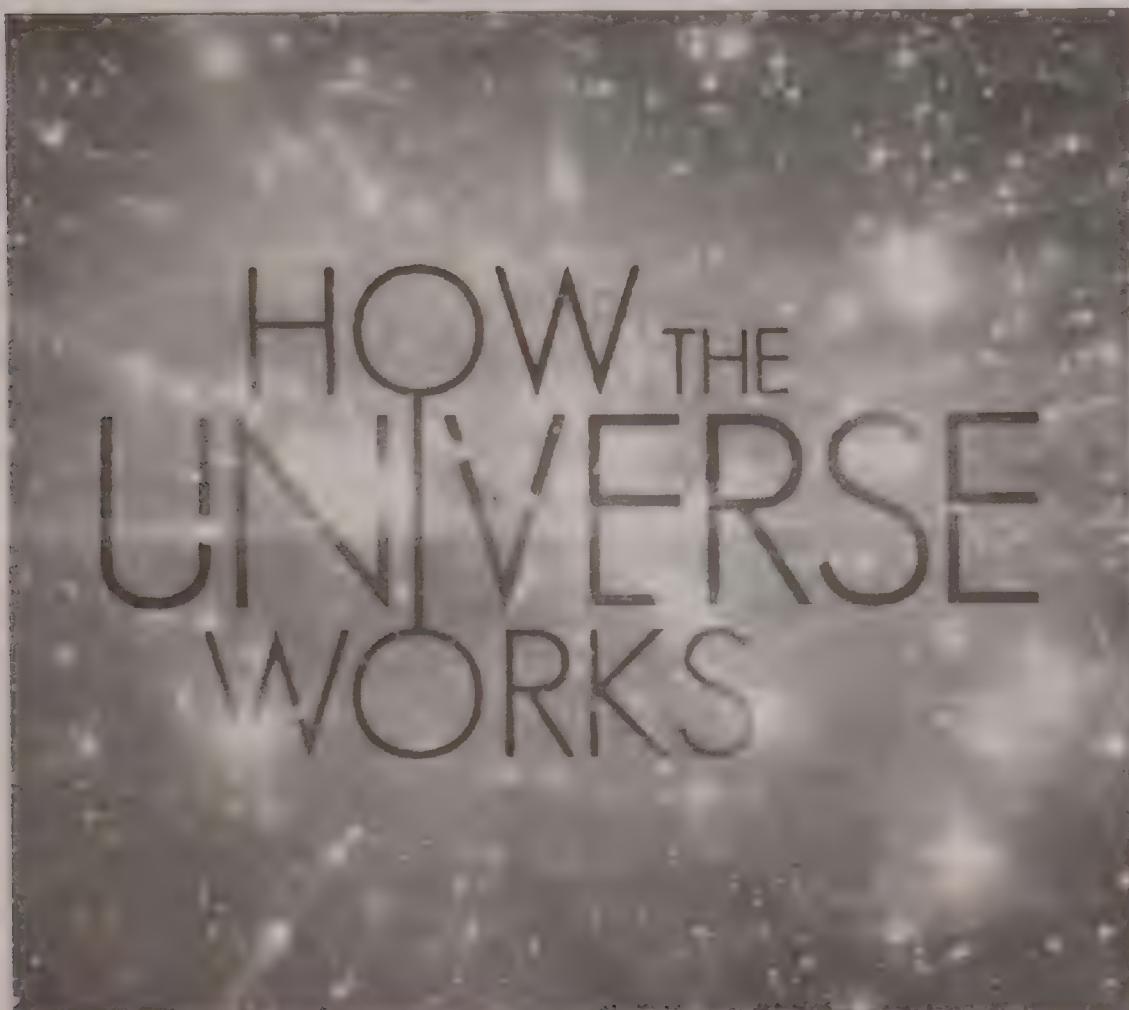
**Sabrina Charles
Biography**

Sabrina Charles is an artist and a dreamer. She is a lover and a mother. She believes, deeply, in helping humanity return to the caring, loving & prosperous race that it once was.

She is an author and the Founder of Sabrina Charles Publications, which can be found at

www.SabrinaCharles.com,

which she uses to promote her websites and various other publications. She currently resides on the East Coast of the USA with her husband and son; but has her eyes set on the Tropics!



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My Scottish Holidays

By Rory Gaudon

*Happy New Year everyone!
Thank you for your
generosity and gifts. Our
paper has progressed
greatly because of your
contributions through the
years. Best wishes to all.
Elvis*

Sunday, August 17, at 8:25 a.m.

Today I am going on a tour of Oban, Lochs Castles, Glencoe and the Western Highlands of Scotland. I am picked up at my hotel by a bus driver suitably dressed in green tartans. He introduces himself as David. I settle into my seat in anticipation as we make the rounds to pick up the other tourists at varying hotels and I think to myself, "Well this is a new experience, it feels quite different to see a driver on the opposite side of an automobile". As we depart Glasgow our guide informs us about the whiskey sheds. He also mentions the whiskey distillery in Oban as we cross the Erskine Bridge, which overlooks the Dumbarton Rock Castle. The Scots have a long history of the distillation of whisky and I can tell they are proud of the quality.

As we drive through the countryside's flat terrain into the spectacular Scottish Highlands, my eyes light up at the sight of the ancient landscape. I am astounded by the beauty of the breath taking valleys nestled amongst green rounded and rocky peaked mountains with dangerous looking cliffs. Apparently, these are the best mountains in the world for ice climbing. Our bus travels by Ben Lomond on the west side of Loch Lomond which is situated around the head of Loch Long's steep rocky mountains known as the Arrochar Alps. We arrive in Luss, an older village and classic example of typical Scottish 18th century planning. I note the small cottage like homes dotted around the edge of Loch Lomond. It is sunny in Luss (a welcome change from the typical Scottish gloom and mist), and very charming. Our guide points out the ancient Luss Parish Church and its cemetery. He explains that there are Viking people buried there Dating back to the 11th century. I decide to walk over to a river flowing into the Loch and I follow a path back through a beautiful park back to the tour bus. As we continue, the weather



changes into a light drizzling rain with strong winds that almost blow us off the highway. Typical weather for the Highlands. We arrive at our next stop, Inveraray Castle, built in the 14th century. The Duke of Argyll took residence there in 1701. Currently the 13th Duke of Argyll owns it. He set up the estate for tourism, however, only one quarter of this once fortress is allowed for viewing. The rest is out of bounds as it used by the Duke and his staff who work in the Castle.

We enter Inveraray Castle through its main corridor, and turn right into a living room filled with exquisite antiques, chairs, couches, porcelain, dressers, a harp and old paintings from the 18th century era. The scenery from the windows is peaceful and overlooks the surrounding landscape. In a rounded corner of the castle, which was once a guard lookout tower, there are numerous collections of tableware from past decades displayed in glass cabinets. The adjoining room has a magnificent piano and couches for family or guests. There are grand paintings and portraits of various people who have lived there over the years. I walk into a massive room filled with weapons and armor. There are old rifles set up in circular patterns, swords

overlapping each other, jousting weapons in racks and a variety of old armor on stands. We move onto a landing in the stairwell showcasing clothing in glass cases worn by the previous Duke's and other royal members of Inveraray. As I get to the top of the stairs, I see a room with numerous drums mounted to the walls. It is a very fine collection from drum corps of past generations. I pop into a small nursery area beside a bedroom featuring a 6 foot tall wooden bed frame, its curtains drawn aside. I find these antiques fascinating. There is furniture with wooden wheels on the legs and bases. I venture down to the dining room with Jon, an editor from the INSP conference, and we admire gold and silver trays, candle holders with small statues of ships and men in armor displayed on a gorgeous antique dining table. As we gaze upon a portrait of the first Duke, Jon tells me he realizes the walls were painted from floor to ceiling in a pattern of flowers intended to duplicate the lifestyle of the 18th century. Every room has a fireplace. No doubt to offset the chilly dampness of the Scottish climate. Next we proceed down to the basement to check out the restaurant and souvenir shop. I purchase a sheep ornament as a gift for an old friend. As

we leave the structure I take pictures of lambs grazing in the pasture. At one time there were 19 million sheep wandering the Scottish terrain. Today there are about 11 million of these woolly animals grazing upon the lands of Scotland.

We gather back to the tour bus and continuing our adventure we pass by the Kilchurn Castle. We travel along Loch Lomond and Loch Awe and enter the town of Oban, once a fishing village and now the gateway to the Isles of Scotland, which hosts a bustling tourism industry. Jon and I then exit the bus in order to visit the whisky distillery situated in Oban. I personally do not drink and have no use for alcohol, however it is a four billion pound a year industry and very much an important part of Scottish history. I find that looking into any type of prosperous business gives me an insight into success. Unfortunately, as we arrived at the distillery we were informed that tours were booked for the day, so we checked out the trinkets, assorted glasses, coasters and aged bottles of whiskey in the stores on the main road. Jon and I decide to have lunch in a family restaurant and then back to the pickup point to continue our journey. The winds coming from the Northern Atlantic Ocean where extremely strong. We travelled along the amazing west coast, viewing Loch Crenan. Our driver David stopped for 20 minutes at an old deserted castle called Stather that sits on its own Islet in Loch Laich.

As we drove through the light rainfall to Glencoe, also known as "Weeping Glen", David told us a sad but true story of a famous battle in 1692. The MacDonald Clan was betrayed by the English army and were massacred. The ones that escaped the slaughter perished in the freezing winter. The scenery was so fantastically beautiful I found it hard to visualize the horrors of the past. We travelled on to Ronnach Moor, stopping for coffee at The Drovers Inn, established in 1705. Then we journeyed out of the mountains to our drop off point at City Hall in Glasgow. Jon and I ate supper at an Indian restaurant in Glasgow. Jon said he planned to visit the museums there before heading home to Denmark. I told him I planned to go back to the Highlands.

To be continued...

The Lighter Side - Laughter is Good for the Soul

Linguistics

A linguistics professor was lecturing his class one day.

"In English", he said, "A double negative forms a positive. In some languages, though, such as Russian, a double negative is still a negative. However, there is no language wherein a double positive can form a negative."

A loud voice from the back of the class pipes up, "YEAH, RIGHT."

Lawyers

Robert went to his lawyer and said, "I would like to make a will but I don't know how to go about it." The lawyer smiled at Robert and said, "That's ok. Leave it all to me."

Robert looks at the lawyer in dismay and says, "Well I knew you were going to take a big portion, but I sure would like to leave my family something too!"

Mother-in-Law

Brenda and Terry are going out for the evening. The last thing they do is put their cat out. The taxi arrives, and as the couple walk out of the house, the cat scoots back in.

Terry returns inside to chase it out. Brenda, not wanting it known that the house will be empty, says to the cab driver, "My husband is just going upstairs to say goodbye to my mother."

Several minutes later an exhausted looking Terry climbs into the cab and says, "Sorry I took so long, the stupid idiot was hiding under the bed and I had to poke her with a coat hanger several times to get her to come out!"

Marriage gone wrong

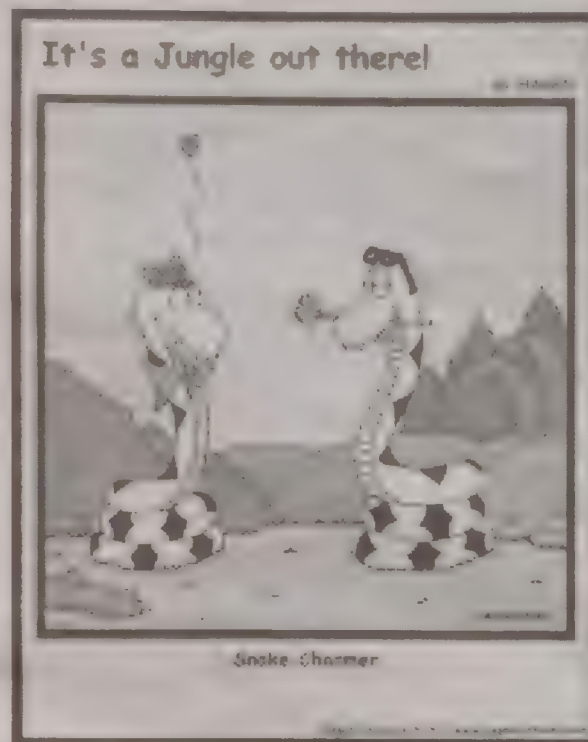
Paula was anxiously awaiting her daughter Janet's plane to land. Janet had just come back from abroad trying to find adventure in her gap year. As Janet was exiting the plane, Paula noticed a man directly behind her daughter dressed in feathers and carrying a shrunken head. Janet introduces this man as her husband.

Paula gasps in disbelief and disappointment and screams, "I said for you to marry a rich doctor.....A RICH DOCTOR!"

Marriage gone really wrong

A man and a woman were having dinner in a fine restaurant. The waitress, taking an order from another customer, notices the man slowly sliding down his chair and under the table. "That's odd", she thinks, "the woman with him seems totally unconcerned". She comes over to the table and says, "Pardon me ma'am, but I think your husband just slid under the table. Is he alright?"

The woman calmly looks at the waitress and says, "No he didn't. He just walked in the door."



Quotes from the Heart

Sometimes the heart sees
what is invisible to the eye.
H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

Where there is love
there is life.
Mahatma Gandhi

The best and most beautiful things in the world
cannot be seen or even touched -
they must be felt with the heart.
Helen Keller

MEALS & RESOURCES IN CALGARY

Drop-In Centre

2nd Floor

1 Dermot Baldwin Way, SE

Meal Schedules:

Breakfast 7:00 a.m.
Snack 9:30 a.m.
Lunch 12:00 p.m.
Snack 3:30 p.m.
Dinner 6:00 p.m.

Center of Hope

420 - 9th Avenue, SE

Free for Clients, Open to Public for small charge

Meal Schedules:

Breakfast \$2.50
Lunch \$3.00
Dinner \$4.50

Exit Community Outreach

117 - 7th Avenue, SW

Meal Schedules:

Sunday 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.
Emergency Meals

Calgary Inter-Faith Food Bank

(403) 253-2055

Food Hamper

NeighbourLink Calgary

(403) 209-1930

Food Bank

Youth Shelter

112 - 16th Avenue SE

Meal Schedules:

7 days a week 4:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Inn from the Cold

(403) 263-8384

Emergency Food

Community Supports

Streetlight - Youth for Christ

Parks at 10th Avenue & 1st Street, SE

Meal Schedules:

Monday & Thursday
Emergency Meals

Alex Community Health Centre

Unit 101, 1318 Centre Street, NE

Meal Schedules:

Thursdays ONLY at 10:30 a.m.
Food Bank

Calgary Street Church

Meals on the Street outside City Hall

Meal Schedules:

Wednesday 6:00 p.m.
Friday 6:00 p.m.
Sunday 1:00 p.m.

Muslim Families Network

Society, Halal Food

8336 - 34th Avenue, NW

Meal Schedules:

Monday & Thursday
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Community Meals

Calgary Poppy Fund and Veterans

Meal Schedules:

Monday to Friday
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Food Bank

CUPS (Calgary Urban Project Society)

128 - 7th Avenue, SE

Food Hamper & meals

Feed the Hungry, St. Mary's Cathedral

Meal Schedules:

Sunday Dinner
3:30 to 5:00 p.m.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Alberta Street News is a local paper in Edmonton which focuses on issues surrounding Individuals that have barriers.

We are currently looking for Volunteers that have an interest in Writing, Journalism, and Print and Web Page Design.

If you would like to become a Volunteer to gain experience for your future, please contact us at Alberta Street News ...

780.399.6788

www.albertastreetnews.org

Zoo Animals

H Y N D H V Q X R H O A U M V N J M W V
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PENGUIN

SEAL

TIGER

KANGAROO

ZEBRA

GOAT

LION

ARMADILLO

ELEPHANT

CAMEL

BAT

HIPPO

LIZARD

MONKEY

SPIDER

BEAR

APE

DOLPHIN

HORSE

ORANGUTAN

SNAKE

STRAFFE

FREE MEALS IN EDMONTON

Bissell Centre
10527 - 96 Street

Meal Schedules:

Monday to Friday
Sandwiches 10:00 a.m.
Snacks 2:00 and 6:00 p.m.

*Tuesday and Thursdays - Hot lunch
for Women at 12:00 p.m.*

Inner City Pastoral Ministry
10527 - 96 Street (Bissell Centre)

Meal Schedules:

Sunday 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.
After the Church Service

Christ Church
12116 - 102 Avenue

Meal Schedules:

3rd Sunday of the month
5:30 p.m. meal

Lighthouse Ministries
3010 - 119 Avenue

Meal Schedules:

Wednesday and Sunday
1:00 and 7:00 p.m. Meal

Salvation Army
9620 - 101 A Avenue

Meal Schedules:

Thursday 12:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Friday 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.

Hope Mission
(780) 422-2018

Meal Schedules:

Breakfast 7:00 to 7:45 a.m.
Lunch 12:00 p.m.
Supper 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.

All Saints' Anglican Cathedral
10035 - 103 Street

Meal Schedules:

Thursday 12:45 p.m.
Friday 7:30 - 9:30 a.m.
Breakfast served November to March

St. Peter's Lutheran Church
9606 - 110 Avenue

Meal Schedules:

Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday
7:00 to 9:00 a.m.

Marian Centre
10528 - 98 Street

Meal Schedules:

Daily EXCEPT Wednesday
12:00 to 12:45 p.m.
*Closed from the 27th of each month to
re-open for the 1st of next month.*

Lighthouse Ministries
3010 - 119 Avenue

Meal Schedules:

Wednesday and Sunday
1:00 and 7:00 p.m. Meal

The Mustard Seed
10636 - 96 Street

Meal Schedules:

Monday to Friday
7:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Zero Tolerance to alcohol

Operation Friendship
9526 - 106 Avenue

Meal Schedules:

Monday to Friday
Breakfast 9:00 a.m.
Monday to Sunday
Lunch 12:00 p.m.
Supper for Seniors 55 and older
ONLY 5:00 p.m.

Red Road Healing Society
4225 - 118 Avenue

Meal Schedules:

Tuesday & Thursday 5:00 p.m.
Meal
Friday 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. Soup &
Bannock

Robertson Wesley United Church
10209 - 123 Street

Meal Schedules:

Sunday Dinner
3:30 to 5:00 p.m.

St. Faith's Anglican
11725 - 93 Street - Parish Hall

Meal Schedules:

Thursday 12:30 p.m. Soup
Saturday 8:30 to 10:00 a.m. Breakfast
3rd Friday of the month 7:00 p.m.
Supper

B's Diner
100 Street & Whyte Avenue

Meal Schedules:

Wednesday 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Meal

Edmonton Orthodox Reformed Church
11610 - 95 A Street

Meal Schedules:

Thursday 6:15 p.m. Soup & Study

Victory Café and Soup Bar
13411 Fort Road

Meal Schedules:

Monday 5:30 to 6:45 p.m. Meal

Jasper Place Health & Wellness Centre
15210 Stony Plain Road

Meal Schedules:

Tuesdays 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Boyle Street Community Services
10116 - 105 Avenue

Meal Schedules from Nov to April:

Monday to Sunday
Breakfast 7:00 a.m.
Lunch 11:30 a.m.

Meal Schedule Summer:

Monday to Friday
Lunch 11:30 a.m.

Welcome to the Premier Edition of Back on Track



By Sarah Julie Barendse

Words are powerful. When spoken with intention they can lift you up or crush your spirit. The problem is, that many of us speak without thinking, especially in the heat of the moment, and unfortunately words that cannot be unsaid can last a lifetime.

The words of others have helped to shape who we are, how we think, how we view the world, and more importantly how we see ourselves. But what if the view we have been given isn't accurate?

Often these embedded thoughts have been spoken through filters of other people's views, projecting their insecurities, weaknesses and anger on to us.

One of the most powerful statements I have heard spoken is "Mean people hurt". It holds a double meaning and a vicious circle effect. Those who are angry towards others do hurt them through their words and actions, but they have also been hurt and are hurting or they would not feel the need to lash out.

Choosing to live consciously, pause and think before speaking and break that repetitive destructive cycle is the only way free.

This little story "The Fence" is one of the most poignant illustrations I have ever come across and I wanted to share it with you.

"There once was a little boy who had a bad temper. His father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, he must hammer a nail into the fence.

The first day the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks as he learned to control his anger, the number of nails hammered daily, gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence.

Finally the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper. The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone.

The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. He said, "You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same.

When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one." You can put a knife in a man and draw it out. It won't matter how many times you say I'm sorry, the wound is still there. Make sure you control your temper the next time you are tempted to say something you will regret later."

Author Unknown

Treat others as you yourself would like and expect to be treated. It will come back to you either way.

Sarah Barendse Biography

"Spreading education and knowledge about natural health in order to re-empower people to help heal themselves is why I write."

Sarah J. Barendse is a Creative Writer, Graphic Designer, Natural Health Advocate, Life Enthusiast, Spiritualist and Social Media Maven.

Having grown up with parents far ahead of their time she learned holistic health, herbalism, kinesiology, meditation, body harmony, distance healing and more from her mother. Her studies have continued throughout her life and have found their way into her writing for health

blogs on an international level.

A graphic designer by trade she holds a degree in Computer Animation, graduating Magna Cum Laude, as well as being a Certified Lighting Specialist with the American Lighting Association. She is well versed in natural healing and is always on the hunt for new health related knowledge.

Sarah has authored several hundred blog articles including opinion pieces and investigative articles. Topics range from general health, nutrition, world news, tyranny, happiness, mental health, natural cures, advice, reviews and more always inserting her own brand of humor and unique view on life.

Look forward to many wonderful out of the box articles with which you may or may not agree. Love her or hate her she is not afraid to speak out despite opposition. She is a force to be reckoned with and hard to ignore.

Sarah Currently contributes to:

<http://albertastreetnews.org/>
www.drleonardcoldwell.com
<http://blogs.naturalnews.com/author/sarahbarendse>
www.fuelforthebody.com
www.hcbl.com/blog
www.sarahbarendse.com

Sarah's articles have been republished all over the web

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ECOHH - Edmonton Coalition on Housing and Homeless



Housing, Home, and Hope

By Jim Gurnett

Right to Housing

Edmonton Coalition on Housing and Homelessness has a campaign to collect names from people who support action by the Alberta and federal governments to build more social housing, to take action to make rents more affordable, and to develop comprehensive housing plans. Post cards to sign in support of the campaign are available by contacting jimgurnett@yahoo.ca.

The same issues can be supported by signing an on-line petition that is at www.ecohh.ca.

Tough challenges for renters

The latest information from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation shows things are difficult for anyone needing to rent housing in Alberta, with average rents up over the past year and vacancy rates very low. Reports for Calgary and Edmonton are available at <https://www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/catalog/productList.cfm?cat=79&lang=en&fr=1421775556097>. CMHC also has a range of other reports of specialized rental topics such as seniors and condos.

How poor is Edmonton?

One in eight Edmontonians live in poverty. One in five children live in a poor family. Indigenous people are twice as likely to live in poverty and newer immigrants from Africa and the Middle East also have high levels of poverty. Having decent housing is very difficult for those living in poverty. "A Profile of Poverty in Edmonton" was published in January by Edmonton Social Planning Council and is packed with disturbing details about poverty in the city. It is available at www.edmonton.ca/endpoverty.

Small is beautiful?

And a possible way to address homelessness? There are a growing number of examples of micro-communities with communal kitchens and toilets but teeny individual sleeping units developing in the United States. One interesting article about this movement appeared recently at <http://www.buzzfeed.com/timmurphywriter/tiny-homes#.tizXwKwPM>.

New housing in old neighbourhoods

A visit to many mature neighbourhoods in Edmonton will show a lot of change is underway. On many streets large new houses are rising where small bungalows had sat for decades. And there are many views about these developments. Can infill be a way to address the housing needs of those with little money or is it only an option for wealthier people to gentrify the neighbourhoods and push out those no longer able to afford living there? How do basement and garage suites fit into the idea of infill? The City of Edmonton has been working on these matters and even has a newsletter on the topic. More information, including a report with 23 key recommendations, is at http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/urban_planning_and_design/evolving-infill.aspx.

Want to live in a mansion?

Creative people without a lot of money for rent are finding a way to live in some beautiful

houses in Vancouver instead of being miserable in little places. Read more about it at <http://thetyee.ca/News/2015/01/19/Low-Rent-Mansion-Living/>.



This column is provided by Edmonton Coalition on Housing and Homelessness. For more information about this community organization, see www.ecohh.ca.

ECOHH invites people and organizations to become members in support of its work. ECOHH has an email service that sends a wide variety of news and research items to interested people. To be added to this service send your email address to jimgurnett@yahoo.ca.



Welcome to the Premier Edition of Melissa's Minute

By Melissa O'Keefe

My title is Managing Editor, however, I assist with Ad Sales, Marketing and Operations for Alberta Street News. Though it is a long description, it suits me. My motto is phrase of length... *Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious*.

Though I have an educational background in writing, journalism, rehabilitation practitioner, and psychology, my real life background is what got me to where I am today. I experienced homelessness, as a result of a drug addiction. I am over 6 years clean.

I have a vision, a dream and a goal for Alberta Street News ... summed up it is called "BEING SUCCESSFUL". "In order to have greatness, you must be greatness." Alberta Street News was given to us with a great foundation, now I will give that foundation expansion.

In the next few months you will not only be able to visually see the change, but you will notice the content of the paper to include a more diverse change. Adding more writers from different walks of life will help in the growth of Alberta Street News.

You will notice more Vendors on the city streets. You will be able to visit us at booths at Southgate and Kingsway Malls. You will recognize Alberta Street News as a noteworthy paper that you will want to buy, you will want to subscribe to, you will want to advertise with, and you will want to sponsor. Because in the end, you will want to support our cause of helping the homeless.

And that's Melissa's Minute for February.

Until next time... have yourself a *Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious* month!!



War Monger's Field Day and the Citizens of the World Revolt

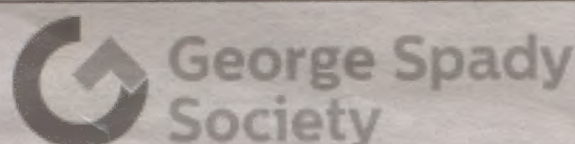


By John Zapantis

Bureaucrat, hypocrite President George W. Bush.
 You're living proof.
 You finally admit there was no WMD in Iraq.
 Cause you were never on track and we don't want you back.
 You could've. You should've.
 You wanted to do what your father did, that you done.
 Run down our brothers; that was wrong.
 You're pushing for power.
 Like when those fools made a break to build the Tower of Babel.
 Your truth of deception, couldn't ever get you re-elected.
 Cause today's wars that creates your stronger US economy,
 is your major disaster ready to happen.
 Bing, Budda Boom, Budda Bang, out pops a nuclear missile launcher
 pointing directly at San Francisco.
 But if it's too late, as you insinuate, you always make the UN negotiate,
 that inevitable mess you caused, in making your former CIA operative
 friend and ally Osama Bin Laden and that 911 go down.
 4 planes went down.
 2 hit the World Trade Centres, One crashed in the White House
 and the other in a farmer's field.
 Brother and sisters it just ain't fair.
 Armageddon is waiting everywhere, in heightening the tensions.
 Cause everybody's worst nightmare is watching the Stars and Stripes
 walkin on egg shells, everywhere.
 It just ain't fair.
 Siphoning the hard working citizen's tax paying dollars.
 Enough to make an honest hard working man holler, while abusing the
 working man's tax dollars to fuel the power of greed,
 control and world destruction.
 When everyone starts to wake up in one day opening their eyes, come
 judgment day, never mind at election time.
 You ain't going to be re-elected, just rejected.
 Cause your friend Osama Bin Laden may stop fighting.
 When the people of the world come to realize, that 'Enough is enough,
 their laws aren't working for us!'
 We've been starving, struggling to pay our bills.
 Feed our young to keep a roof over our heads.
 The revolutions about to start.
 The votes been enforced.
 You all better run and hide, Osama, Bush CIA, FBI, we all know,
 you're a living lie.
 With those worldly authoritative US allies, we all know
 you sold your souls.
 Now its time to make you all hang, for fooling us all the time.
 We'll collect what belongs to us.
 Keep your contract, cause the revolutions coming to collect.
 What belongs to the people, the freedom to choose in
 abolishing these lies.
 Give us back our liberty.
 You'll be forgiven for your lies.
 So that the People's Party of the World will all unite as one, to finally
 determine a more prosperous future for tomorrow!

An analogy of this poem- The 911 event was evident of retribution on the USA's global reach into unwarranted territories.

My poem is a depiction of that potential for a nuclear war that could possibly happen in the very near future if the USA continues on with their war effort and game plan to seek other unwarranted territories.



For more information about the George Spady Society or to make a donation, please visit our website at

www.gspady.org

or call us

587.524.1530

MISSION

Alberta Street News Society provides a voice, employment and social support to those who need these, and communications perspective dealing with poverty and social justice, by education and communication activities, including publishing a street newspaper.

Values/Beliefs/Guiding Principles

We believe in being inclusive and encouraging. We believe that human rights are fundamental to living together. We believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to earn and control their money. We believe in journalistic and organizational professionalism and integrity. We believe the public needs to know about the issues of poverty and social justice. We value community and connecting with others. We value passion and determination. We believe everyone deserves the opportunity to learn, develop and use communication skills.

Rob's Corner



By Robert Champion

What are Friends? City in a Crunch

Friends are very important and should not be taken for granted. Friends are there for you when you have not been treated well by others. Friends are there for you when you are feeling sad or lonely. Friends are there for you when you need someone to talk to. Friends are there for you when you have stories to share. Friends are there for you when you need a helping hand. True friends will not judge you. A real friend will listen to you and keep an open mind. A friend will give you suggestions, as opposed to advice or telling you what they think you should do. A friend will have compassion and understanding, especially if you have just lost someone close to you.

Words of Wisdom

Choose your friends carefully. We become like those we choose to surround ourselves with.

It is always a good idea to get to know someone before you consider them a friend. A friend is someone you feel comfortable with. A friend is someone who brings out the best in you. It's a good idea to keep your guard up until you can say you really know them well enough to place your trust in them. Make sure they do not take advantage of your generosity. Don't fight or argue, do your best to keep your attitude positive in what you have to say. Approach new friendships with an open mind and be a good listener.

The waiting list for affordable housing in Calgary is growing. Here in Calgary the average wait time for affordable housing is 5 to 7 years. That includes those who have disabilities. My common-law wife (who passed away in August 2012) and I have lived in Calgary Housing for over 39 years. Lorna and I, along with our daughter, moved to Calgary in September of 1979. When we applied for Calgary Housing in 1980, there was about a one year waiting list. Calgary now has the highest rents in Canada. A two bedroom apartment is over 1,300 dollars a month. The city is currently debating over whether to allow secondary suites in order to create more affordable housing options. Meanwhile the city is growing as more and more people are moving here in search of work.

Sad Memories and Happier Times

My Christmas

This past Christmas was a sad time for me. It was the third Christmas since my common-law wife Lorna passed away. It's been 2 and half years now since I lost her to cancer. I am feeling pretty good though as I received some CPP and OSA and I live in subsidized housing. I am going into my 21st year of being involved with a street newspaper. I have been selling, distributing

and writing since 1996. I have had my own column since November of 1998.

Things I do to support my happiness

I stay active by riding my bicycle almost year round. I meet up with friends for coffee and beers. I am eating better now. I have three favorite pubs I go to, all within 20 minutes of where I live. I love riding my bike and meeting new people. I love writing for Alberta Street News. I am also in a creative writing group that meets right in my building in the Family Resource Room.

chat and some good laughs.

- Sharing stories from the past. Sharing stories about what is going on now.
- Watching the Calgary Flames or the Stampeders on the big screen at one of my favorite pubs.
- Talking about world events.
- Watching classic TV shows and movies.
- Listening to my favorite radio stations. I personally like 103 and 107 in Calgary.

Value your friends and their friendship because they won't be around forever and neither will you.

My favorite things to do

- Writing for Alberta Street News.
- Going for a bike ride.
- Meeting with friends in a coffee shop.
- Meeting with friends (and sometimes strangers) in a pub for some beers, chit

Rob's Say of the Day

Choose to be Happy

Be happy where you are. You just might be in the best place ever. Don't take life for granted. As long as you have breath, LIFE can have something beautiful for you.

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